

STATE OF VERMONT

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 02-20

[Racial Equity Task Force]

WHEREAS, with the promulgation of Executive Order No. 04-18, codified as Executive Order No. 3-86, Governor Philip B. Scott clearly articulated a goal of having a more diverse and welcoming state; and

WHEREAS, Vermont must create a culture in which racial, ethnic and other cultural disparities are openly acknowledged and addressed; and

WHEREAS, the State of Vermont has demonstrated leadership in this regard through the creation of a Racial Equity Advisory Panel and the hiring of the Executive Director of Racial Equity; and

WHEREAS, the State must and will continue to address the challenges of achieving racial, ethnic and cultural equity across the State; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted racial inequities across the United States, including in Vermont. COVID-19 and other emergencies demonstrate that disparities in times of crisis are reflective of disparities in times of prosperity, and that we must actively work to reduce structural inequities to ensure that no community is more vulnerable than another based on immutable factors such as race or ethnicity; and

WHEREAS, we must bring state leaders, agencies and interested parties together from across Vermont to examine existing law on hate crimes, evaluate systems of support and look to increase civic participation among racially diverse populations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Philip B. Scott, by the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Vermont, do hereby create the Governor's Racial Equity Task Force, as follows:

I. Composition and Appointments

The Governor's Racial Equity Task Force may consist of up to eight members or approved alternates, including:

1. the Executive Director of Racial Equity who shall be Chair;
2. one member representing the Governor's Office, appointed by the Governor;
3. one member of the public, appointed by the Governor from among three individuals recommended by the Task Force;
4. one member from the law enforcement community, appointed by the Governor;

5. one member representing the Vermont chapters of the NAACP, appointed by the Governor;
6. one member from the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs, appointed by the Governor;
7. one member representing the Vermont ACLU, appointed by the Governor; and
8. the Executive Director of the Human Rights Commission.

The Task Force may, in its discretion, consult with any agency or department, or private sector professionals, outside of the Task Force for information and advice. The Executive Director of Racial Equity shall consult with the Racial Equity Advisory Panel prior to finalizing Task Force recommendations.

II. Charge and Process

The Task Force is hereby ordered to undertake the following three projects in the following order of priority:

1. Evaluate structures of support for racially diverse populations, particularly in light of the disparities in health outcomes highlighted by COVID-19:
 - a. Structures that currently exist in Vermont;
 - b. Models that have succeeded in other jurisdictions;
 - c. Policy changes Vermont should consider or efforts the state can promote;
 - d. Tools the state can provide to communities;
 - e. Language access; and
 - f. Economics, housing, healthcare and access to credit.
2. Review current state and federal law on hate speech and freedom of speech and consider:
 - a. Changes to state law that would facilitate prosecuting harassment, hate speech and other bias-motivated crimes; and
 - b. Changes to State law necessary to ban Confederate flags or other similarly incendiary flags/images from being displayed in places that receive state funding. If all such proposed changes are determined by the Task Force to be highly likely to be found by a state or federal court to unconstitutionally restrict speech, after consultation with experts in constitutional law, the Task Force shall identify the entity most appropriate to conduct training and education in this regard.
3. Study and present options for encouraging Vermonters from diverse, marginalized, or underrepresented racial and ethnic groups to run and serve in public office at all levels (local, state, including boards and commissions and federal). The Task Force shall determine:
 - a. Who, or what, organization(s) should conduct the training;
 - b. Whether there is grant funding available to support this effort; and
 - c. Whether there is a program in Vermont or elsewhere that could be replicated.

The Task Force shall be advisory to the Governor and make recommendations on the first Project by August 15, 2020. The Task Force shall also provide advice as needed by the Governor. Preliminary recommendations on Projects 2 and 3 shall be submitted to the Governor by December 15, 2020.

The Task Force shall meet as needed and at least monthly. Meetings of the Task Force will be public and shall be held electronically for the duration of the COVID-19-related state of emergency and for so long thereafter as the Task Force deems practicable. The Task Force shall ensure notice of the meetings is received in different geographic regions of the State in order to encourage public participation.

The Task Force shall receive administrative and staff support from the Office of the Governor and the Agency of Administration.

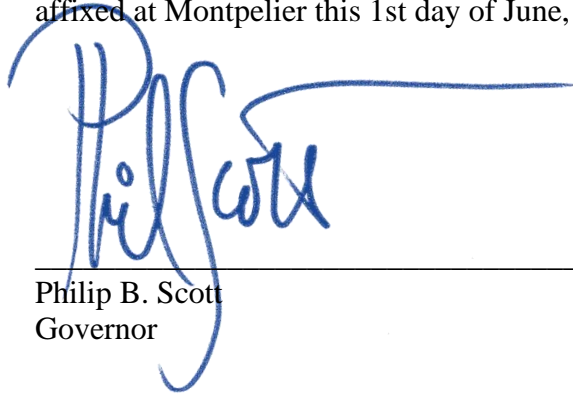
To the extent funding is available, each member of the Panel shall be entitled to per diem compensation pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 1010.

III. Effective Date


This Executive Order shall take effect upon signing and shall continue in full force and effect until May 31, 2021 unless extended by the Governor.



WITNESS my name hereunto subscribed and the Great Seal of the State of Vermont hereunto affixed at Montpelier this 1st day of June, 2020.


Philip B. Scott
Governor

By the Governor:


Brittney L. Wilson
Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs

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